

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 252

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. McCOTTER, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. WATSON, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. WU, Mr. SIRES, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. WEINER, Mr. HONDA, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. WALZ, Mr. PETERS, Ms. SUTTON, Mr. COSTA, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mr. WOLF, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HIMES, Mr. BACA, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. FATTAH, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SPACE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. POLIS of Colorado, Mr. LANCE, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. OLVER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. STARK, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. TSONGAS, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. DREIER, Mr. NUNES, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. TIERNEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy

2 SHORT TITLE

4 This resolution may be cited as the “Affirmation of
5 the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Reso-
6 lution”.

8 SEC. 2.

(1) The Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, 500,000 survivors were expelled from their homes, and which succeeded in the elimination of the over 2,500-year presence of Armenians in their historic homeland.

(2) On May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers, England, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging for the first time ever another government of committing “a crime against humanity”.

1 (3) This joint statement stated “the Allied Govern-
2 ments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they
3 will hold personally responsible for these crimes all mem-
4 bers of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their
5 agents who are implicated in such massacres”.

6 (4) The post-World War I Turkish Government in-
7 dicted the top leaders involved in the “organization and
8 execution” of the Armenian Genocide and in the “mas-
9 sacre and destruction of the Armenians”.

10 (5) In a series of courts-martial, officials of the
11 Young Turk Regime were tried and convicted, as charged,
12 for organizing and executing massacres against the Arme-
13 nian people.

14 (6) The chief organizers of the Armenian Genocide,
15 Minister of War Enver, Minister of the Interior Talaat,
16 and Minister of the Navy Jemal were all condemned to
17 death for their crimes, however, the verdicts of the courts
18 were not enforced.

19 (7) The Armenian Genocide and these domestic judi-
20 cial failures are documented with overwhelming evidence
21 in the national archives of Austria, France, Germany,
22 Great Britain, Russia, the United States, the Vatican and
23 many other countries, and this vast body of evidence at-
24 tests to the same facts, the same events, and the same
25 consequences.

1 (8) The United States National Archives and Record
2 Administration holds extensive and thorough documenta-
3 tion on the Armenian Genocide, especially in its holdings
4 under Record Group 59 of the United States Department
5 of State, files 867.00 and 867.40, which are open and
6 widely available to the public and interested institutions.

7 (9) The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United States
8 Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916,
9 organized and led protests by officials of many countries,
10 among them the allies of the Ottoman Empire, against
11 the Armenian Genocide.

12 (10) Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly described to
13 the United States Department of State the policy of the
14 Government of the Ottoman Empire as “a campaign of
15 race extermination,” and was instructed on July 16, 1915,
16 by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that
17 the “Department approves your procedure . . . to stop
18 Armenian persecution”.

19 (11) Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 of February
20 9, 1916, resolved that “the President of the United States
21 be respectfully asked to designate a day on which the citi-
22 zens of this country may give expression to their sympathy
23 by contributing funds now being raised for the relief of
24 the Armenians”, who at the time were enduring “starva-
25 tion, disease, and untold suffering”.

1 (12) President Woodrow Wilson concurred and also
2 encouraged the formation of the organization known as
3 Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress, which
4 contributed some \$116,000,000 from 1915 to 1930 to aid
5 Armenian Genocide survivors, including 132,000 orphans
6 who became foster children of the American people.

7 (13) Senate Resolution 359, dated May 11, 1920,
8 stated in part, “the testimony adduced at the hearings
9 conducted by the sub-committee of the Senate Committee
10 on Foreign Relations have clearly established the truth of
11 the reported massacres and other atrocities from which
12 the Armenian people have suffered”.

13 (14) The resolution followed the April 13, 1920, re-
14 port to the Senate of the American Military Mission to
15 Armenia led by General James Harbord, that stated
16 “[m]utilation, violation, torture, and death have left their
17 haunting memories in a hundred beautiful Armenian val-
18 leys, and the traveler in that region is seldom free from
19 the evidence of this most colossal crime of all the ages”.

20 (15) As displayed in the United States Holocaust Me-
21 morial Museum, Adolf Hitler, on ordering his military
22 commanders to attack Poland without provocation in
23 1939, dismissed objections by saying “[w]ho, after all,
24 speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?” and
25 thus set the stage for the Holocaust.

1 (16) Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term “geno-
 2 cide” in 1944, and who was the earliest proponent of the
 3 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punish-
 4 ment of Genocide, invoked the Armenian case as a defini-
 5 tive example of genocide in the 20th century.

6 (17) The first resolution on genocide adopted by the
 7 United Nations at Lemkin’s urging, the December 11,
 8 1946, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 96(1)
 9 and the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and
 10 Punishment of Genocide itself recognized the Armenian
 11 Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations intended
 12 to prevent and punish by codifying existing standards.

13 (18) In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Com-
 14 mission invoked the Armenian Genocide “precisely . . .
 15 one of the types of acts which the modern term ‘crimes
 16 against humanity’ is intended to cover” as a precedent for
 17 the Nuremberg tribunals.

18 (19) The Commission stated that “[t]he provisions
 19 of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sevres were obvi-
 20 ously intended to cover, in conformity with the Allied note
 21 of 1915 . . . , offenses which had been committed on
 22 Turkish territory against persons of Turkish citizenship,
 23 though of Armenian or Greek race. This article constitutes
 24 therefore a precedent for Article 6c and 5c of the Nurem-
 25 berg and Tokyo Charters, and offers an example of one

1 of the categories of ‘crimes against humanity’ as under-
2 stood by these enactments”.

3 (20) House Joint Resolution 148, adopted on April
4 8, 1975, resolved: “[t]hat April 24, 1975, is hereby des-
5 ignated as ‘National Day of Remembrance of Man’s Inhu-
6 manity to Man’, and the President of the United States
7 is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling
8 upon the people of the United States to observe such day
9 as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide,
10 especially those of Armenian ancestry . . .”.

11 (21) President Ronald Reagan in proclamation num-
12 ber 4838, dated April 22, 1981, stated in part “like the
13 genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of
14 the Cambodians, which followed it—and like too many
15 other persecutions of too many other people—the lessons
16 of the Holocaust must never be forgotten”.

17 (22) House Joint Resolution 247, adopted on Sep-
18 tember 10, 1984, resolved: “[t]hat April 24, 1985, is here-
19 by designated as ‘National Day of Remembrance of Man’s
20 Inhumanity to Man’, and the President of the United
21 States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation
22 calling upon the people of the United States to observe
23 such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of
24 genocide, especially the one and one-half million people of
25 Armenian ancestry . . .”.

1 (23) In August 1985, after extensive study and delib-
2 eration, the United Nations SubCommission on Preven-
3 tion of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities voted
4 14 to 1 to accept a report entitled “Study of the Question
5 of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Geno-
6 cide,” which stated “[t]he Nazi aberration has unfortu-
7 nately not been the only case of genocide in the 20th cen-
8 tury. Among other examples which can be cited as quali-
9 fying are . . . the Ottoman massacre of Armenians in
10 1915–1916”.

11 (24) This report also explained that “[a]t least
12 1,000,000, and possibly well over half of the Armenian
13 population, are reliably estimated to have been killed or
14 death marched by independent authorities and eye-wit-
15 nesses. This is corroborated by reports in United States,
16 German and British archives and of contemporary dip-
17 lomats in the Ottoman Empire, including those of its ally
18 Germany.”.

19 (25) The United States Holocaust Memorial Council,
20 an independent Federal agency, unanimously resolved on
21 April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memo-
22 rial Museum would include the Armenian Genocide in the
23 Museum and has since done so.

24 (26) Reviewing an aberrant 1982 expression (later
25 retracted) by the United States Department of State as-

1 setting that the facts of the Armenian Genocide may be
2 ambiguous, the United States Court of Appeals for the
3 District of Columbia in 1993, after a review of documents
4 pertaining to the policy record of the United States, noted
5 that the assertion on ambiguity in the United States
6 record about the Armenian Genocide “contradicted long-
7 standing United States policy and was eventually re-
8 tracted”.

9 (27) On June 5, 1996, the House of Representatives
10 adopted an amendment to House Bill 3540 (the Foreign
11 Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Ap-
12 propriations Act, 1997) to reduce aid to Turkey by
13 \$3,000,000 (an estimate of its payment of lobbying fees
14 in the United States) until the Turkish Government ac-
15 knowledged the Armenian Genocide and took steps to
16 honor the memory of its victims.

17 (28) President William Jefferson Clinton, on April
18 24, 1998, stated: “This year, as in the past, we join with
19 Armenian-Americans throughout the nation in commemo-
20 rating one of the saddest chapters in the history of this
21 century, the deportations and massacres of a million and
22 a half Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in the years
23 1915–1923.”.

24 (29) President George W. Bush, on April 24, 2004,
25 stated: “On this day, we pause in remembrance of one

1 of the most horrible tragedies of the 20th century, the an-
2 nihilation of as many as 1,500,000 Armenians through
3 forced exile and murder at the end of the Ottoman Em-
4 pire.”.

5 (30) Despite the international recognition and affir-
6 mation of the Armenian Genocide, the failure of the do-
7 mestic and international authorities to punish those re-
8 sponsible for the Armenian Genocide is a reason why simi-
9 lar genocides have recurred and may recur in the future,
10 and that a just resolution will help prevent future geno-
11 cides.

12 DECLARATION OF POLICY

13 SEC. 3.

14 The House of Representatives—

15 (1) calls upon the President to ensure that the for-
16 eign policy of the United States reflects appropriate un-
17 derstanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to
18 human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented
19 in the United States record relating to the Armenian
20 Genocide and the consequences of the failure to realize a
21 just resolution; and

22 (2) calls upon the President in the President’s annual
23 message commemorating the Armenian Genocide issued
24 on or about April 24, to accurately characterize the sys-
25 tematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Arme-
26 nians as genocide and to recall the proud history of United

- 1 States intervention in opposition to the Armenian Geno-
- 2 cide.

